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The Meeting of Minds and Moves: The Substance and Significance of the
Middle East to Venezuela's Foreign Policy 1999-2008

Makram Haluani
Department of Economics and Business Administration
Simon Bolivar University
Caracas, Venezuela
E-mail: mhaluani@usb.ve

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1. Introduction

It can be fairly and convincingly argued that ever since Hugo Chávez Frías (henceforth referred to here as HCF) assumed the presidency of Venezuela in February of 1999 no such thing as an institutional Venezuelan foreign policy evolved or ever became a reality. The de-institutionalization of the Venezuelan foreign policy became a fixture starting January of that year with his visit to Spain (as president-elect). The highly personalistic touch of HCF on every aspect of his domestic and foreign policy was hard to ignore back then and impossible to forget now. The almost extreme personalism in the contemporary Venezuelan domestic and foreign policy realm is attributed to several factors, the most conspicuous of which are his charisma, strong personality, weakness of any rival politician or political group either in his own camp or within the opposition leadership, plus the extraordinarily high oil revenues that Venezuela has been benefiting from starting April-June 2003. Research in Venezuela on HCF's virtually unrivaled stranglehold on Venezuelan politics, both inward and outward, is amply represented in the literature (Blanco, 2002; Caballero, 2002; Medina and López Maya, 2003; Méndez, 2004; Pastor and Salamanca, 2004). Venezuela lost all institutional control over its international relations and they became for all practical purposes HCF's foreign policy.

The uniquely personalistic and absolute control of HCF over the foreign policy of his country unilaterally shaped all policy initiatives made towards other nations, both near and far. Up to April 2002 most analysts liked to classify the objectives of HCF's foreign policy as those concerning United States-Venezuela relations and those concerning Venezuela's relations with other nations, particularly those in Latin America and other developing countries in other parts of the world, placing a strong emphasis on HCF's personal appraisal of the state of world affairs and international relations. However, after his brief removal from office in April 2002, and more so after surviving the recall referendum in August 2004, it became apparent that HCF's approach to geo-strategic and continental balances and counter-balances, world affairs in general and foreign policies of key countries in particular cannot be objectively discussed and studied according to the bi-factorial classification mentioned earlier. The distinction between United States-Venezuela relations on one hand and those concerning Venezuela's relations with other developing nations on the other, both in and out of Latin America, was never helpful in understanding HCF's mindset and his approach to world politics.

It became fairly clear that the United States with its obvious and multifacetic advantage in world politics has always been and will remain the main focus, if not personal obsession, of HCF's global ideological outlook and international political strategy. Dissociating Venezuela's foreign policy objectives and moves from HCF's interests is not a valid starting premise for any rational analysis of the country's standing and weight in international politics. After the (much contested) recall referendum of August 2004, HCF avidly sought political glory abroad to counter criticism to his ever-more autocratic methods at home and to overshadow the mediocre quality of the social programs he has been launching since 1999 to appeal to the poor in Venezuela. Aided by ever-higher oil revenues as if it were his personal purse, and motivated by his admiration for Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution of 1959, HCF set to challenge the U.S. "Empire", frequently and conveniently replaced by the figure of the U.S. president George Bush. The U.S. took center stage in HCF's rhetoric as the source and instrument of all "neo-liberal" globalization malice hampering the developing world's efforts to achieve prosperity and independence.

Notwithstanding the fact that commerce between the U.S. and Venezuela, specifically crude oil, cars and consumption goods, has grown and mushroomed over the years, HCF's acid rhetoric against president Bush and the U.S. "Evil Empire" has acquired an unproportionally prominent position within the concept and strategies and moves of his "multi-polar" and "neo-socialist" foreign policy and international relations. HCF's decidedly anti-U.S. language ensures him the unquestioned and steadfast support of leftist groups around the world, which is what he needs and aspires to in order to claim the ideological mantle of an ever-diminishing Fidel Castro. On another important note, foreign policy can quite often be a reflection and even a cure to the political troubles on the domestic front of many a once-popular, charismatic leader. The severe crisis over HCF's recognition of the Colombian guerrillas-FARC and his confrontation with that country's government helps to shore up his popularity at home. His constant reminder to his supporters of the supposedly imminent "U.S. invasion" of Venezuela also helps to play the role of the "victim" of "U.S. Imperialism". A region that from the beginning was of a special interest to HCF was the Middle East, specifically its anti-Western Arab and Persian spheres. The allure of the anti-Western Middle East to the socialist-revolutionary Bolivarian government in Caracas did not only materialize through the OPEC-liaison, but rather through the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iraq-U.S. and the Iranian WMD-issue, among other potentially conflictive themes. This paper seeks to examine the core ideological values, geopolitical and geo-strategic aspects and other specific and relevant issues that make the Middle East so centrally salient in current Venezuelan foreign policy.

2. Chávez' Revolution and its Impact on Venezuelan Foreign Policy

On November 2, 2007, the Venezuelan National Assembly submitted to the National Electoral Council (CNE) the text containing changes to 69 articles of the Constitution, with the request to organize a referendum to approve or reject the proposed "reform" of the Constitution championed by HCF. The CNE was responsible for organizing the referendum for December 2, 2007, but it published the full text of the changes on November 12, allowing voters only 18 days to study the changes and make up their minds on how to vote. Separate votes were to take place on two blocks of articles; the first, called A, including the changes originally proposed by the President, which were analyzed in the last summary, plus 13 new ones proposed by the Advisory Commission created by HCF, and which include:

- lowering the voting age to 16;
- weakening the protection of intellectual property;
- adopting a foreign policy geared to "establishing a pluripolar world, free of the hegemony of any imperialist power center". promoting integration and
- a confederation (*with Cuba?*) and categorizing the foreign service as a "strategic activity of the state";
- defining the socio-economic regime of Venezuela as based on "socialist, anti imperialist and humanist principles" and dropping the present principles of "social justice; democracy and free competition";
- making future constitutional amendments and reforms more difficult by increasing the number of voters able to initiate them from 15% to 20% (amendments) to 25% (reform) and to 30% for the convening of a Constituent Assembly, as well as increasing in all cases the minimum number of participating voters, but allowing the CNE to shorten the holding of a referendum from "in" 30 days to "within" 30 days.

The 23 articles of block B, described as the contribution of the National Assembly, but in fact also reflecting the views of HCF, and produced only at the end of the third parliamentary discussion, include:

- the suppression of the words “of all persons” after the words “rights and freedoms” to be guaranteed by the state in compliance with the principle of non discrimination.
- significant increases in the percentages of voters required to request the organization of consultative (from 10% to 20%) and recall (from 20% to 30%) referenda, the annulment of laws (from 10% to 30%), as well as the annulment of laws promulgated by the President under enabling laws (from 5% to 30%);
- the participation of administrative staff in elections to choose University authorities;
- the transfer to the central government of the income of states derived from non-metallic minerals, salt flats, roads and highways;
- the functional subordination of state comptroller offices to the central National Comptrollers’ office;
- the substitution of the civil society and of the law faculties as members of the postulation committees to select Supreme Court and National Electoral Council magistrates by spokesmen of the Poder Popular; the exclusive authority of the President of the Republic and of his Council of Ministers to declare all states of exception (emergency) suspending constitutional rights, without any time limitation, eliminating the present requirement of securing approval of the decree declaring the state of exception by parliament within 8 days of having been dictated, as well as its submission to the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice for its opinion on its constitutionality,
- canceling the guarantee of maintaining in such states the rights to due process, information and the protection of the remaining intangible human rights, and of ensuring their conformity with the International Pact of Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention of Human Rights,
- entrusting solely the President and his ministers with the decision of when the circumstances that gave rise to the imposition of such states of exception have ended.

The text of the proposal ends with 15 transitory provisions of which the most important ones are the first, listing fifteen laws constituting the backbone of the new revolutionary legal framework, and the ninth, authorizing HCF to regulate by decree “the transition towards the socialist economy model” even before the principles included in article 112 of the new Constitution are developed. The laws listed in the first transitory provision are the laws of the *Poder Popular*, of the Promotion of the Socialist Economy, of the Political and Territorial Organization of the Republic, of the Central Bank, of the National Fund of the *Poder Popular*, of the Municipal Branch, of the Foreign Service, of Hydrocarbons, of Gas, of the punishment of torture (as a crime), of Labor, of the System of Justice, of the Social Security System, of the establishment of the Fund for Social Stability for self-employed workers, and of Education. HCF announced that more than a hundred laws would be promulgated soon after the “reform” was approved. It will be recalled that the *Enabling Law* authorizing HCF to legislate by decree only expires in mid 2008.

HCF’s radical proposals were meant to force Venezuelans to define themselves either as “democrats” supporting him and what he stands for, or as “old fashioned fascists and/or opportunists” opposing him. This sounds caricaturesque, but it is exactly what ensued. Polarization of the electorate has always suited HCF well, as his popularity is more and more

concentrated on the remaining affection of the poor in the light of his generally dismal performance as a ruler. His campaign was designed to deepen polarization through support or rejection of his person (“SI, con Chávez”, “Sigue con Chávez”), threatening, in his first campaign speech, the “oligarchs of the east of Caracas” with a million people who would not “leave stone on stone” if they attempted another coup against his government. Not surprisingly the government has shown little interest in allowing an open discussion of his “reform” proposal, and the televised debates that had been foreseen for the second half of November were cancelled. Yet the defeat of the reform proposals in the referendum of December 2 2007 evidently thwarted HCF’s attempts to polarize Venezuelan society as “HCF-democrats versus anti-HCF fascists” and to broaden and strengthen his power base. He still has the “Enabling Law” to use, but his electoral and political defeat did not have any significant effect on his domestic or foreign policies. Actually it so seems that because he was politically weakened at home, he rationalizes that a stronger international presence would compensate his domestic fragility.

3. Defining HCF’s New Foreign Policy

Since the start of the Bush administration in January 2001, HCF has been highly critical of U.S. economic and foreign policy. He has constantly and forcefully criticized U.S. policy with regards to Iraq, Haiti (U.S.-backed ouster of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004), the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the Kyoto Protocols, among other major international issues. HCF’s public friendship with Cuban President Fidel Castro and his significant and very lenient trade relationship with Cuba have undermined the U.S. policy of isolating Cuba. Longstanding ties between the U.S. and Venezuelan militaries were also severed on HCF’s initiative. HCF’s stance as a higher-OPEC price champion has also raised the price of oil for consumers worldwide as Venezuela pushed OPEC producers towards lower production ceilings, with the resultant price settling around \$25 a barrel prior to 2004. During Venezuela’s holding of the OPEC-presidency in 2000, HCF made a ten-day tour of OPEC-countries, in the process becoming the first head of state to meet Saddam Hussein since the Gulf War of 1991. The visit was controversial both in Venezuela and in the U.S., although HCF did respect the ban on international flights to and from Iraq, driving from Iran his previous stop, into Iraq.

The Bush administration has consistently opposed HCF’s policies, and although it did not immediately recognize the Pedro Carmona government upon its installation during the April 2002 coup, it seemed it had funded groups behind the coup, acknowledged the new government and seemed to hope it would last. The U.S. government has called HCF a “negative force” in the region, and has sought support from among Venezuela’s neighbors to isolate him diplomatically and economically. One notable instance occurred at the 2005 meeting of the Organization of American States, when a U.S. resolution to add a mechanism to monitor the nature of democracies was widely seen as an attempt to diplomatically isolate both HCF and the Venezuelan government. The failure of the resolution was seen by analysts as politically significant, evidencing some degree of support in Latin American for HCF, his policies, and his views, or at least indifference towards the U.S.’s interests and wishes. The U.S. has also opposed and lobbied against numerous Venezuelan arms purchases made so far under HCF, including a purchase of some 100,000 AK-103 rifles (which U. S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld implied would be passed on to the FARC), 24 fighter airplanes and 3 submarines from Russia, and the purchase of aircraft from Brazil (http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2007_06_17_archive.html). The U.S. has also warned Israel

not to carry through on a deal to upgrade Venezuela's aging fleet of F-16s, and has put similar pressure on Spain. In August 2005, HCF rescinded the rights of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents to operate in Venezuelan territory, territorial airspace and territorial waters. While U.S. State Department officials stated that the DEA agents' presence was intended to stem cocaine traffic from Colombia, HCF argued that there was reason to believe the DEA agents were gathering intelligence for a clandestine assassination, supposedly targeting him, with intentions of ending the Bolivarian Revolution.

At the September 2005 UN World Summit, HCF mocked and denounced the neo-liberal model of globalization promulgated by the Washington Consensus, as a fundamentally “fraudulent and malicious scheme”. Referring to such arrangements as FTAA, DR-CAFTA, and NAFTA, HCF stated that such “market-oriented policies, open market policies” were and continue to be “... the fundamental cause of the great evils and the great tragedies currently suffered by the Third World”. HCF went on to contrast the overwhelming hunger, disease, and poverty of many capitalist Third World countries that institute Washington Consensus policies (the Philippines, El Salvador, Honduras) with the results garnered over the last eight years of his administration's socialist policies: “One million four hundred and six thousand Venezuelans learned to read and write. We are 25 million, in total ... And three million Venezuelans, who had always been excluded because of poverty, are now part of primary, secondary and higher education”. HCF went on to emphasize the accomplishments of his social welfare programs: “Seventeen million Venezuelans — almost 70% of the population — are receiving, and for the first time, universal healthcare, including medicine ... More than 1,700 tons of food are channeled to over 12 million people at subsidized prices, almost half the population. One million gets them completely free, as they are in a transition period”.

Apart from internationally trumpeting his much publicized, yet widely criticized social domestic programs for their lavish budgets but questionable productivity, such as the “Plan Bolivar 2000”, the *Social Missions*, and “Unique Social Fund”, HCF denounced the global status quo as a mortal threat to humanity, demanding that a new approach be taken towards satisfying the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. He also insisted that both global warming and imminent hydrocarbon depletion are also fundamentally threatening mankind's current as well as future wellbeing. His speech at the UN concluded with loud applause and raucous cheering from attending Third World delegates. On the same trip, he also visited the Bronx in New York City to the delight of crowds who saw him, and during a speech delivered at a Bronx church on September 17 stated that, notwithstanding any grievances he might have with the Bush administration's foreign policy, he had “fallen in love with the soul of the people of the United States”. Later, in October 2005 on his weekly program *Aló Presidente*, HCF stated that recent natural catastrophes, including hurricanes, droughts, floods, and famines, occurring around the globe was Mother Nature's answer to the “world global capitalist model”.

Having mentioned the most publicized HCF ideological and political stances on the world stage, it should be emphasized here what the HCF new foreign policy for Venezuela stands for. According to all foreign policy experts in Venezuela, foremost Carlos Romero, HCF's vision of contemporary international relations and his “New Conceptual Map” must be based on multipolarity and multilateralism, where “yanqui imperialism” has been responsible, through the capitalist model, for the underdevelopment of Latin American nations (Romero, 2007: 29). It is clear that according to HCF's view of international politics, no single nation,

e. g. United States, aided by its NATO allies, should be allowed to assume any pivotal role in any single global issue. The Constitution of 1999 and posterior amendments emphasize *participative democracy* and Bolivarianism. Attempts on part of HCF to anchor socialism in the constitutional framework failed when he was defeated in the December 2007 referendum. Yet Venezuela's foreign policy is nothing if HCF's foreign policy. His numerous international visits as president (187 by the end of 2007 – see Annex 1) constantly serve to promote his projects and ideas that basically challenge the traditional multilateral framework, especially in the Western Hemisphere. These are, for example, his “new concept of an OAS without the U.S.”, a wholly different Free Trade Agreement for the Americas, which HCF calls: Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of our Nations = ALBA, a different concept for the Inter-American Reciprocal Defense Treaty (Río-Pact) and for the bi- as well as multi-national integrational trade schemes for the Andean Community of Nations and for Mercosur.

4. The Allure of the Middle East: Six Issues that Defines its Saliency to HCF

Considering how HCF's ideological and geo-strategic perspectives dictate his geopolitical mindset and diplomatic moves, the Middle East offers a host of compelling bases and reasons to serve his worldwide goals, especially as far as the United States is concerned. As seen from the HCF-dominated Miraflores (presidential palace in Caracas), The Middle East as the geopolitically pivotal “shatterbelt” it has always been, presents itself as an ideal battleground on several fronts to counter not only American, but also NATO-influence in the larger, beyond-Arab-Muslim Middle East sphere. Six different areas, issues and dimensions can be herewith identified that substantially lend the Middle Eastern sphere as a significant focus of HCF's geo-strategic mindset, geopolitical goals and diplomatic moves:

- General, Islam-related and anti-U.S. sentiments on a societal level that prevail in the larger Middle East sphere lend themselves exceptionally well to the acceptance of political leaders, be they from within or without the middle eastern zones, that specifically oppose U.S. and general European/Transatlantic/NATO-presence there. Notwithstanding the eastern middle governments' tolerance or even the support for the presence of the U.S. there in political, economic and/or military dimension, the “Moslem street” throughout the larger Middle East and in particular the “Arab street” is highly sensitive to U.S. presence due to Washington, D.C.'s almost unconditional support of Israel and it's perceived indifference to the plight of the Palestinians, both in and out of Israel and Israeli-occupied areas. Any vocal support of a pacifist or violent, shia- or sunni-Moslem cause, such as HCF has voiced, is a welcome gesture for many Moslem groups in the Middle East.
- Specific Middle Eastern governments' anti-U.S. stance, now foremost on the part of Iran (and recently to a lesser degree Libya) present a diplomatically, politically and geopolitically viable platform from which Latin American government leaders such as HCF can initiate and cement their presence firmly and well outside the Western Hemisphere. Aided by unprecedented oil international reserves, HCF is well in a financially comfortable position to offer substantial and long-term government-to-government economic, commercial and industrial cooperation that complement geo-strategic and geopolitical alliances, such as is the case currently between Iran and Venezuela (see the expanded treatment of this particular issue later in this paper). Aside from Middle Eastern proper governmental platforms, China's and Russia's official and often hostile positions regarding the diplomatic, economic and/or military presence of the

U.S. in the Middle East and Central Asia are another ready and irresistible platform for ideologically motivated and politically interested anti-U.S. leaders like HCF to use in advancing his own global, anti-U.S./NATO agenda.

- Palestinian issues in the Moslem world in general and in the larger Middle East in particular are a constant fixture in the agenda of their governments and societies. Issues such as Jerusalem and the return of the Palestinian refugees, amongst others, arguably less strategic but nevertheless of equal emotional resonance among both Arabs and Moslems, can easily be addressed and as such exploited by outside leaders, especially HCF, in order to garner sympathy and support for his geo-strategic anti-U.S./NATO and pro-Palestinian stance. Even if the Palestinian cause is more often than not inadequately represented by such different and rivaling factions as the militant, ex-guerrillas Fatah/PLO versus Hamas, versus “bourgeois” middle-class intellectuals, such as Hanan Ashrawi and Sari Nuseiba, popular Moslem and/or Arab sentiments in the larger Middle East are easily swayed by vociferous diplomatic support from a leader of a Catholic and western country such as Venezuela.
- OPEC-oil price agenda setting strategy and conditions are a top priority for HCF’s government for two main reasons. The first aims at securing higher oil revenues that translate into more financial prowess on the domestic front to ensure the continuation and growth of his manifold social programs “Missions” (*Misiones*). These programs account for the backbone of his social policies and aim to appeal to the poor of the country. Notwithstanding the objective evaluation of their effectiveness and success, the “missions” are politically vital to HCF’s popularity and hence to his hold on power. Secondly, by driving the oil price higher HCF seeks to disrupt the G-7/OECD/NATO countries’ industrial and economic performance and to weaken their global political and diplomatic influence and hence move closer to his goal of a truly “multipolar” world. Even though like-minded Opec-members (Iran, Libya, Algeria) may partially support this policy, other, pro-Western Opec-members, such as Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf nations, Nigeria and Indonesia put effective brakes on HCF’s “sky-high” oil price drive.
- Issues regarding the Iraq and Afghanistan wars offer HCF another ready platform to rally worldwide, usually leftist support for his “anti-imperialist” policies. Not only the fact that both of these invasions of sovereign countries on apparently unsubstantiated grounds (Iraq’s WMD programs) were launched illegally, i. e. without U.N. support, but the highly-publicized, negative human-rights issues (Abu-Ghraib, Guantánamo, torture policy, etc) that emerged out of applying the Bush-Doctrine via military might generated enough ideological and political fallout for the U.S. neo-conservatives. Such negative publicity for the U.S. definitively helps HCF and other leftists worldwide to spearhead and nourish criticism of the U.S. Even though mainstream and liberal forces joined the criticism of president Bush’s “preventive war” approach, the HCF-led leftists in Latin American and elsewhere have made U.S. “imperialism” and “anti-yanquism” a major banner in their drive to weaken or even neutralize U.S. geopolitical and economic influence worldwide. The rise of Russia, Chin and India greatly globally contributes to their role as “counterforces” to U.S./OECD/NATO.
- Third World issues and topics that are often and legitimately addressed by the General Assembly and several other organs of the United Nations, such as poverty, “heartless” and

relentless, “aggressive” globalization, environmental contamination, human rights, “capitalist exploitation” and “excesses” on part of transnational corporations in developing countries, are also important, global issues and arguments that ideologically anti-capitalist leaders like HCF are frequently tempted to publicly marshal against NATO- and OECD-countries, as if these were the only ones responsible for all the issues mentioned. More specific, U.S.-related stances, such as the Kyoto Protocols, the treaty aiming to prohibit ant-personnel mines, and the International Criminal Court, among others, are also often used by HCF’s international visits to weaken global support for the U.S. and to secure more sympathy for HCF’s stances, especially as far as his hostility to the U.S. is concerned.

Having briefly addressed the six main issues that characterize the ideological, geopolitical and economic saliency the Middle East represents for HCF, it is equally important to discuss at certain length the “special relationship” that binds HCF with the currently two most anti-U.S. countries belonging to the larger Middle East, namely Iran and Libya. Also of interest are HCF’s relations with Israel, which will be addressed later on. On HCF’s constant and forceful initiatives, Venezuela has developed extraordinarily strong ties with the Islamist government of Iran, particularly in the area of energy production, and economic, commercial and industrial cooperation. He has visited Iran on several occasions, the first time in 2001, when he declared that he came to Iran to “prepare the road for peace, justice, stability and progress for the 21st century”. The then President of Iran, Mohamed Khatami has also visited Venezuela on three occasions. During his 2005 visit, HCF awarded him the *Orden del Libertador* and called him a “tireless fighter for all the right causes in the world”. In May of 2006, HCF expressed his favorable view of the production of nuclear energy in Iran announced by the then new Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. HCF went on to deny that they (Iran and Venezuela) had any plans to develop nuclear weapons (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_policy_of_Hugo_Ch%C3%A1vez). His relationship with Iran and his support of their nuclear program has predictably created concern in the neo-conservative U.S. administration. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice commented that, given the geo-strategic views and political strategy of HCF in relation to Iran, “Venezuela has become a negative force in the region”, leaving it open to speculation whether she meant the Latin American or the Middle East region.

HCF also received Iran’s highest honor from President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. HCF paid a two-day visit to Iran in 2007, as Iran faced international criticism for its alleged nuclear program and as a backer of the Lebanon-based Hezbollah guerrillas. On HCF’s birthday (July 28), Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad presented Chavez with Iran’s highest honor for “supporting Tehran in its nuclear standoff with the international community”. HCF pledged in return that Venezuela would “stand by Iran at any time and under any condition”. Ahmedinejad called HCF a kindred spirit. “I feel I have met a brother and trench mate after meeting Chávez”. HCF said he “admired the Iranian president for ‘his wisdom and strength’,” saying, “We are with you and with Iran forever. As long as we remain united we will be able to defeat (U.S.) imperialism, but if we are divided they will push us aside”. According to Reuters news agency, HCF told the students at Tehran University, “If the US empire succeeds in consolidating its dominance, then humankind has no future. Therefore, we have to save humankind and put an end to the U.S. empire”. HCF went on to attack Israel and labeled the 2006 Lebanon war offensive as “fascist and terrorist”. Decorating HCF with the “Highest Medal of the Islamic Republic of Iran”, Ahmadinejad said, “Mr. Chávez is my brother, he is a

friend of the Iranian nation and people seeking freedom around the world. He works perpetually against the dominant system. He is a worker of God and a servant of the people".

Venezuela has long cultivated ties with Middle Eastern governments, especially since the 1960's, finding common ground in attempting to keep oil prices high, but since 2000 HCF's deliberate strategy of cultivating an especially strong, multi-level engagement with the Islamic Republic of Iran has become a defining element in his efforts to build an alliance to curb U.S. influence in developing countries generally and in the Middle East in particular. The strengthening of ties has turned Iran into Venezuela's closest ally outside Latin America, adding clout to HCF's efforts within OPEC to increase revenue through output limits by oil-exporting countries. Venezuela has also become the most vociferous defender of Iran's nuclear program at a time when Iran feels increasingly isolated. It is worthy to note in this context that Venezuela, Syria and Cuba were the only countries to oppose referring Iran to the United Nations Security Council at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in February 2006. With Iranian investments in Venezuela currently rising fast, what began as a trickle of ventures has evolved into the most vivid example of Venezuela's move to reshape its foreign policy and distance itself from the U.S. by reaching out to countries on the margins of American influence, including Belarus, Zimbabwe and Cuba.

Hundreds of Iranian tractors are already rolling off an assembly line at a plant in Venezuela's interior, and Khodro, the Iranian car manufacturer, plans to produce 5,000 Samand sedans a year at factory near Caracas, slated to start production in November 2007 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/21/world/americas/21venez.html>). Since Venezuela's futile attempts in September-October 2006 for a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, the ties with Iran have added to HCF-initiated friction with the U. S. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, Frank Urbancic Jr., the principal deputy coordinator for counterterrorism in the State Department, said that Venezuela's close relations, including intelligence operations, with Iran and Cuba helped illustrate a "near complete lack of (Venezuelan) cooperation" with U.S. efforts to fight terrorism. Furthermore, the Bush administration angered HCF by appointing J. Patrick Maher, a longtime CIA official, to oversee intelligence-gathering operations in Venezuela and Cuba. It should be mentioned here that a comparable post had existed previously only for Iran and North Korea. HCF ridiculed the move and said he had captured four people accused of spying for the U.S., though the U.S. Embassy in Caracas stated it had no knowledge of such apprehensions. The Bush administration's more aggressive stance has drawn sharp criticism from U.S. government officials, who contend the U.S. is planning military action against Venezuela, hoping to control the country's petroleum resources, the largest conventional reserves of heavy oil outside the Middle East.

Petropars, the Iranian national oil company, said it could invest as much as \$4 billion in petroleum ventures in Venezuela to produce crude oil and natural gas. "We want to help them," said Mohammad Ali Talebi, a Petropars representative in Venezuela and director of a venture that may extract sulfur-laden heavy oil in an south-eastern region in Venezuela. HCF has also supported Iran's efforts to price oil in euros instead of U.S. dollars, a move aimed at weakening the influence of U.S. investment banks and hedge funds worldwide, and the creation of an oil exchange in Iran to trade such contracts. "Geopolitically, the most important front for HCF in the world at this moment is Iran," said Alberto Garrido, a historian who wrote on Venezuela's ties to Muslim countries. "Chávez, together with his closest advisers, have defined the strategic alliance with Iran as a means with which to counter American

power”. The ties with Iran have inevitably fueled theories - though without any substantiation - among HCF’s fractious opponents that Venezuela could be sending uranium from its Amazonas state to Iran in exchange for nuclear technology. There have also been unsubstantiated speculations that HCF is aiming eventually at a replay of the Cuban missile crisis of October of 1962 to further increase tensions with the U.S. and thus assure “sky-high” oil prices. Venezuela has repeatedly said it has no plans to develop nuclear weapons. HCF stated in Tehran that he would support an effort to develop a nuclear energy program by Mercosur, the South American trade bloc that Venezuela recently joined, to which nuclear-savvy Brazil and Argentina belong.

In an interview on Iranian Press-TV with HCF, aired on July 17, 2007, he said: “It is an example for other countries. In this year we have signed 164 cooperation agreements in the areas of energy, industry, politics, culture, science, education, and health, etc. All these agreements are aimed at solidarity, spirituality and cooperation. In that sense, the results that we get from these relations will have a powerful impact on other countries, for example in Latin America, Middle East, Asia and Africa. Iranian technology and industries are now being used in Venezuela, Venezuelan technicians are trained in Iran and Iranian experts are training them in Venezuela. We were poor people, mostly illiterate. Now we are progressing. The ties with Iran are by far different from the relations we had with the capitalists. Our revolutionary economy is at the service of human beings. Right now, Iran and Bolivia are talking over having the same kind of relations. The same has happened in the case of Nicaragua. The relations between Iran and Venezuela are having an impact on the whole world. That's why the imperialists are so concerned”.

<http://www.wakeupfromyourslumber.com/node/2523>

It should be noted at this point that a strong relationship between Venezuela and the Muslim countries, both in and outside the Middle East, is nothing new. This relationship dates to the formation of OPEC in Baghdad in 1960, largely the brainchild of the then Venezuelan oil minister Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonso. An approximation to Iran may have gotten under way in the mid-1990’s by Norberto Ceresole, an Argentine sociologist known for his radical views who was then an adviser of HCF. But HCF later distanced himself from Ceresole, who died in 2003 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/21/world/americas/21venez.html?pagewanted=print>). After HCF was elected president in December 1998, he made political and economic relations with Iran a priority in his push for OPEC to raise oil prices. Recent statements by HCF in Iran and other Muslim countries, however, are increasing concern in Caracas that the Venezuelan president is increasingly aligning himself too closely with Muslim leaders who have little in common with Venezuela’s generally Christian, pro-Western, inclusive, pluralistic political values system. Though Venezuela maintains close and actually ever stronger economic and commercial ties with the U.S., political relations between Caracas and Washington, D.C. have been strained in the last eight years by ever-escalating verbal sparring between the Bush administration and HCF.

Concerning HCF’s relations with Libya, his first trip to Libya occurred in October 2001 after a personal invitation he received in 1999 from Muammar al-Gaddafi. During this short visit to Tripoli, both leaders discussed the international situation, declining oil prices, and OPEC production levels. Felipe Mujica, the leader of the Venezuelam opposition party MAS, accused HCF then of not reporting his trip to Libya to the legislative authorities and disguising it under a tour of Europe and Africa. In 2004, Muammar al-Gaddafi awarded HCF

in Tripoli, the "Al-Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights", which HCF accepted and called al-Gaddafi a "friend and brother", affirming they "shared the same social view". In 2006, during HCF's third visit to Libya, the two leaders signed a general treaty of economical and cultural cooperation, and HCF called for a mutual union against what he called "American hegemony". Venezuela's former ambassador to Libya Julio César Pineda said in 2003 that HCF was "coordinating an anti-American strategy with terrorist states" following his visit to Libya. But since Libya has been recently moving to repair ties with the U.S. and the European Union (by offering compensations for the Lockerbie bombing), HCF's ongoing efforts to establish himself as Latin America's leading opponent of the Bush administration cannot count all too confidently on Libyan support.

HCF's relations, or rather attitude to Israel, deserve special attention in the current context of the Middle East saliency regarding the Bolivarian-Socialist foreign policy concept and moves. After fighting between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah militia began in July 2006, HCF recalled his highest-ranking diplomat in Israel. Then, in his weekly television program *Aló Presidente*, HCF accused Israel of a "new Holocaust". The authorities in Jerusalem responded by recalling Israel's ambassador in Venezuela, Shlomo Cohen, for consultations. "We have to categorically reject the comments for attempting to make the Holocaust banal," said Fred Pressner, then president of the Confederation of Jewish Associations of Venezuela. But some Jewish community leaders in Venezuela also said earlier this year that comments by HCF about the "descendants of the same ones who crucified Christ", were too hastily interpreted as anti-Semitic. But local-Venezuelan and worldwide criticism of HCF continued nevertheless because of his remarks in an interview with the news agency Al Jazeera in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. HCF made the first of two strong statements regarding Israel, saying, "They are doing what Hitler did against the Jews". Political analysts based in Caracas noted that the comments about Israel and other recent moves, like the appointment of far-left Nicolas Maduro as Venezuelan foreign minister, were evidence of a radicalization of HCF's foreign policy which by then had stronger ties with Iran at its center. Maduro, who resigned as speaker of the National Assembly to assume the foreign ministry, traveled to Iran in February 2006 to show support of HCF for its nuclear program (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/21/world/americas/21venez.html?pagewanted=print>).

Furthermore, in August 2006 HCF ordered the Venezuelan charge d'affaires in Israel to return from Tel Aviv to Venezuela, protesting against the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. Israel responded by recalling the Israeli ambassador to Venezuela. In another interview with Al Jazeera while in Qatar, HCF stated that Israeli military actions in Lebanon were "being carried out in the style of Hitler, in a fascist fashion". Two days later, on his Sunday radio program in Venezuela, *Aló Presidente*, he said Israel had "gone mad and is inflicting on the people of Palestine and Lebanon the same thing they have criticized, and with reason: the Holocaust. But this is a new Holocaust with the help of the United States," which he described as a "terrorist" country. He went on to say that the United States refuses "to allow the U.N. Security Council to make a decision to halt the genocide Israel is committing against the Palestinian and Lebanese people" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel-Venezuela_relations). Despite specifically referring to the actions of the Israeli government, rather than making vague references to "Jews", accusations of anti-semitism have been leveled against HCF because of these comments. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) wrote a letter to HCF, asking him to consider how his statements might affect Venezuela, and the

southern area director of the ADL, accused HCF of "distorting history and torturing the truth, as he has done in this case. It is a dangerous exercise which echoes classic anti-Semitic themes".

The president of the Miami-based right-wing *Independent Venezuelan-American Citizens*, said "That's what you expect from someone who surrounds himself with the dregs of the world. He seeks out terrorists and dictators. It's predictable that he wouldn't defend a democratic country like Israel". Jewish-Venezuelan community leaders in Caracas claimed in a *El Nuevo Herald* article that HCF's statements have created a situation of "fear and discomfort... The president is not the president of a single group but of Venezuelan Jews as well". The *Federation of Israeli Associations of Venezuela* condemned "attempts to trivialize the Holocaust, the premeditated and systematic extermination of millions of human beings solely because they were Jews ... by comparing it with the current war actions". Critics of Israel in and outside the Middle East have hailed HCF as a "friend of the Arab and Muslim world". The vice-chairman of Hizballah's political council, Mahmoud Komati, called his actions an example for "revolutionaries", and a "London, left-wing lawmaker" said that HCF was a "real leader of the Arab people". Needless to say, HCF's decidedly anti-Israel policy fits neatly in his drive to rally around him all nations and sub-national groups opposed to the "U.S. hegemony" and its allies, be they NATO members or strategic partners of the U.S., such as Israel. Hostility to Israel, from HCF's ideological and geo-strategic perspective and also in objective terms, certainly increases his stance in the "Arab and Moslem street", but it does not necessarily endear him to many an Arab and Moslem government wary of compromising its standing with the Bush administration by criticizing or even antagonizing Israel or the Jewish population in their territory.

5. Potential Consequences of HCF's Middle East Policy

Studying the global geo-strategic view and mindset of HCF and his foreign policy moves vis-à-vis the Middle East so far, it is quite tempting to draw alarming conclusions right from the onset of such an analysis. The two charts elaborated and presented below detail HCF's travels to the (larger) Middle East and Middle Eastern leaders' state visits to Venezuela between 2000 and 2007. They are based on journalistic and governmental sources and are also presented as Middle-East-related part of Annex 1 and Annex 2. Out of a total of 187 state visits and trips abroad that HCF has undertaken between January of 2000 and December of 2007 (see also Annex 1), 27 involved several Middle Eastern nations, including (basically) North African Libya. On the other hand, only seven Middle Eastern heads of states visited Venezuela in the same period (see also Annex 2), of which five were carried out by the two successive Iranian presidents, as can be appreciated in the two related charts below:

HCF visits to the Middle East 2000-2007:

Date	State(s) visited	Motive	Significance
August 6-7, 2000	Saudi Arabia	OPEC Sep. 2000 meeting in Caracas	New OPEC crude price agenda and business deals
August 8, 2000	Kuwait	"	"
August 8-9, 2000	Qatar	"	"
August 9, 2000	United Arab Emirates	"	"
August 9-10, 2000	Islamic Rep. of Iran	"	"

August 10, 2000	Iraq	“	“
August 13, 2000	Libya	“	“
August 14-16, 2000	Algiers	“	“
February 17-20, 2001	Saudi Arabia	OPEC price policy	Beefing up OPEC crude exports
February 20-21, 2001	Qatar	“	“
May 18-20, 2001	Islamic Rep. of Iran	Part of a tour to Russia, India, China, Malaysia, and Indonesia	Shoring up HCFs image as a Third World leader
October 12-14, 2001	Algiers	OPEC price policy	“
October 14-16, 2001	Libya	“	“
October 20, 2001	Saudi Arabia	“	“
October 21, 2001	Islamic Rep. of Iran	“	“
Nov. 20-21, 2004	Qatar	Euro-asian tour	Commercial accords signed
Nov. 24-26, 2004	Libya	Chávez awarded the “Gaaddafi International Prize of Human Rights”	Intent to forge an anti-U.S. alliance
Nov. 27-29, 2004	Islamic Rep. of Iran	Euro-asian tour	Bilateral commercial and industrial accords
March 7-8, 2005	Qatar	Also visited France and India	Consolidate commercial and business deals and cooperation
May 15-17, 2006	Algiers	North African tour	Maritime accords
May 17-19, 2006	Libya	Private visit	Informal accords on socials programs
July 27-28, 2006	Qatar	State visit	Support for MERCOSUR
July 28-30, 2006	Islamic Rep. of Iran	“	Further Iranian investments in Venezuela
August 30, 2006	Syria	State visit also to China, Malaysia, Angola	11 integration accords signed and Honoris Causa in I.R. from University of Damascus
June 30-July 2, 2007	Islamic Rep. of Iran	State visit	33 industrial, energy and financial cooperation accords signed

Nov. 17, 2007	Saudi Arabia	III OPEC Summit	Beefing up OPEC crude price
Nov. 19, 2007	Islamic Rep. of Iran	“	Further industrial, energy and financial cooperation discussed

Visits of Middle Eastern/Arab leaders to Venezuela 2000-2007:

Date	Visitor	Motive	Significance
August 25-26, 2000	OPEC-Leaders	Participation in the II OPEC Summit	Beefing up oil prices
February 24-29, 2004	President of Iran Sayyed Mohammad Khatami	Participation in the XII G-15 Summit	Cementing Iranian-Venezuelan alliance
Sep. 3, 2004	Mohammad Abdelaziz, president of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	State visit	Seeking Chávez' influence and support for SADR worldwide
March 10-12, 2005	President of Iran Sayyed Mohammad Khatami	“	Industrial, energy and financial cooperation discussed
Sep. 17-18, 2006	President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad	“	Accords on bilateral energy projects
January 13, 2007	“	“	“
Sep. 27, 2007	“	“	“

Even though HCF's total visits to the Middle East amounted to a mere 15% of all his trips abroad in the stipulated period, it is still an extraordinary diplomatic feat and a geopolitical first for any president of a given Catholic and Latin American country to have paid so much attention to a mostly Moslem-Arab dominated region since only three Venezuelan presidents ever visited the Middle East and in '80 and '90. Carlos Andrés Pérez went to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq and Iran in 1977, in 1990 to Saudi Arabia and Iran for the G-15 meetings and to Algiers in 1991. Luís Herrera Campins was in Saudi Arabia and Iraq in 1980, while Rafael Caldera also journeyed once to the Middle East. Noting this intriguing departure from Latin American statesmen's traditions not to involve the Middle East in their global politics and foreign policy moves, it is only fair to notice the truly revolutionary character of HCF attempts to make the Middle East a substantial part of his Bolivarian-Socialist foray into world politics and international relations strategy. Comparing three state visits of two Venezuelan presidents between 1981 and 1988 to the Middle East with HCF's 27 visits there clearly gives HCF a more “internationalist” advantage, regardless of the ideological background, display, motives and possible consequences for all actors involved.

Notwithstanding the quantity and the frequency of HCF's 27 visits to the Middle East *per se* or the fact that they aimed at the most important Arab and/or Moslem (Iran) countries there, it should be remarked that it is the number and the type of issues that formed the core of HCF's conversations with Arab and Iranian leaders account for the importance of the current Venezuelan/Bolivarian/Socialist-Middle East bondage. The six issues listed earlier are all topics of utmost political and geopolitical sensitivity to all Middle Eastern leaders, whether in the context of their domestic politics or international relations, albeit with varying degrees depending on the countries. Of those six issues, the OPEC-regulated oil price is certainly the most strategic and vital to all the visited Middle Eastern countries, including Syria, even though it is not a member of OPEC, but of the OAPEC. Excepting the oil price agenda setting as a common ground for the Bolivarian/Socialist-Middle Eastern cooperation, the other five issues share the characteristic of being highly regional-specific and culturally (religion) uniquely Middle Eastern in nature that they almost defy ideological, global and geopolitical operationalization, i. e. application by a "foreign" dignitary to the Middle East, such as the Venezuelan president HCF.

Yet HCF infringes in the Middle East with 27 highly publicized, ultimately politicized and ideologically charged state visits in seven years, championing several regional causes that are not his, but rather of great concern to his own declared hemispheric nemesis, namely the U.S. Regardless of what the Middle Eastern leaders HCF met with on these issues may really feel and/or think about HCF and his motives, it must be assumed that not too few of them, especially the more conservative among them, such as the Saudi and other Persian Gulf rulers, were not exactly chagrined to see some of their grievances with the U.S. (Palestinians, U.S. military presence, Arab/Moslem sensitivity to almost unconditional U.S. support to Israel, "heartless" and relentless globalization, U.S. unilateral approach to world politics – "preventive war-doctrine, overexposure to not-always-welcome Western culture) being voiced by a leader from a country belonging to the Pan-American geographic sphere.

This "geo-culturally defiant" drive on part of HCF to involve the Arab/Moslem Middle East in his ideologically motivated global anti-U.S. strategy has only been possible mainly due to three all-important factors: 1) HCF's forceful personality; 2) his ideological obsession with effectively countering U.S. worldwide geopolitical influence; 3) and his oil-based financial resources. The unquestionably charismatic and forceful character HCF possesses has been definitively politically advantageous to him and to his Bolivarian-socialist movement at home, setting him apart as a leader in the domestic political scene and facilitating his (now shaky) personalistic hold on political power. HCF's failed attempt to broaden his political franchise on Venezuela in the referendum of December 2 2007 certainly politically weakened him in both an institutional and a personal realm, but not enough to sway him from his original goals on the domestic and international front. He still counts on a very compliant National Assembly of either ardent believers in him and/or perk-obsessed yes-men, unwilling/unable to change course and abandon their leader, much less to gravitate towards an ever-fragmented and leaderless opposition.

The two other all-important factors also combine to give HCF his really substantial international appeal and subsequently influence. The decidedly unpopular president George Bush, his foreign policy moves ("preventive war" doctrine, invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Ab-Ghraib, Guantánamo, torture policy) hands HCF ready arguments to mount a global ideological and political anti-Bush front, especially at the level of numerous Third World

countries. In essence, the anti-U.S. sentiments prevailing worldwide, including Western Europe, during the Bush administration are merely being exploited by an ideologically motivated and personally interested anti-U.S. HCF. His oil-based financial prowess is certainly a huge advantage and a weapon of choice, both at home and abroad. Never before has a Venezuelan government enjoyed such of stream of unprecedented oil revenues. Yet HCF's handling of the country's income has been the subject of abundant and sharp criticism there as an ever-concerned population, both HCF-loyalists and opposition, watch him spend astronomical sums of money abroad with no legislative control and little practical results to show (see Annex 3). HCF's ability and willingness to finance worldwide alliances, coalitions, protests and diplomatic moves against the U.S. are not achieving their goal of effectively impeding Washington, D.C.'s leverage around the world, but HCF does seem to have successfully evolved into a Ché Guevara-like symbol of an anti-U.S. global movement.

6. Conclusions

After nine years in power, HCF's political record on the domestic and global front is mixed at best. While his admirers both at home and abroad proclaim him a "hero of the dispossessed" and the "saint of the underdogs," his drive towards Bolivarian-socialism in Venezuela is not precisely as successful as HCF and his followers want it to be. Apart from the intense and wide-spread internal pressures due to the manifold failings of the Bolivarian-socialist model, especially as far as housing, food, and hospital services are concerned, HCF's success story on the global front leaves much to be desired by his seemingly overly ambitious agenda. Failing crude exports and Exxon's successful legal move in February of 2008 to freeze some US\$12 billion of Venezuelan state-run oil company PdVSA holdings abroad combine to markedly reduce Venezuela's future oil revenues. At home, the specter of currency devaluation (March 2008) and the increase in gasoline prices will not soften criticism against HCF's fiscal policies, but rather increase popular and middle-class discontent and possibly unrest. The failure of HCF fiscal policies and social programs could actually and eventually encourage both the opposition and HCF-disenchanted (ex-)loyalists to embolden their stance against HCF's political rule.

Far from moving HCF to moderate his domestic and global agenda and soften his revolutionary, Bolivarian-socialist policies, it is widely assumed that such pressures will only lead to more radicalization of the HCF movement in Venezuela and of his international views and moves. No palpable evidence has of late materialized of any HCF policy, whether domestic or foreign, that points to a moderation or change of substance and/or form concerning his goals. Actually more radicalization seems to be in the offing, both internally and externally. The relations with neighboring Colombia are a case in point. The funneling of the purported sum of US\$500 million from the HCF government funds last December to the Colombian rebel group FARC has been interpreted as HCF's attempt to bring even more pressure on Colombia's civilian HCF-critical government by strengthening the guerrillas' financial and paramilitary capabilities and thus forcing a significant upgrading of the Colombian military's position, eventually forcing a militarized solution to Colombia's long-standing internal strife. By calling the areas occupied by the FARC and coincidentally across the Colombo-Venezuelan borders the "real Colombia" and by lately asking other countries to recognize the FARC as belligerent forces, HCF is effectively provoking a serious diplomatic and military crisis with Colombia.

Even though the Middle East may not loom all too large and as an all-time-important on issue in HCF's global agenda, his constant invoking of Middle Eastern/Third World themes in his diplomatic moves leads invariably to the internationalization of Latin American themes and in a sense also to the Latin Americanization of the Middle Eastern issues. The supposedly and currently active nuclear cooperation with Iran, his voiced sympathy for radical Islamist groups, and his criticism of Israel all seem to indicate HCF's desire to provoke a sense of tension in the U.S.-Venezuelan relations and Middle Eastern scene, thus helping to drive up oil price. Furthermore, the current, unilaterally provoked and sustained diplomatic crisis with Colombia (persistent rumors of an intended replay of the Cuban missiles crisis of October of 1962) serve to distract from internal pressure and to force the population at home to rally behind him. To many a Venezuelan analyst, the international agenda of HCF represents an intolerable and unacceptable diversification and dilution of the national political agenda of a leader and a president that was elected to serve mainly his own constituency and not to globalize it ineffectively at the expense of his much-needed domestic attention.

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ANNEX 1**State visits by HCF to the (larger) Middle East in 2000-2007:**1999

- 11 de Enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a España.
- 13 de Enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a París, Francia.
- 14 de Enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a Bonn, Alemania.
- 16 de Enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a Roma, Italia.
- 17 de enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a Cuba.
- (1) 27 de Enero de 1999: Visita (como presidente electo) a Washington, EEUU. Recibimiento del presidente Bill Clinton.
 - (2) 12 de Febrero de 1999: Visita Oficial a Jamaica. Intervención en la Reunión del G-15.
 - (3) 6 de Mayo de 1999: Visita Oficial a Brasilia, Brasil.
 - (4) 27-29 de Mayo de 1999: Visita a Ciudad de México, México. XII reunión de jefes de Estado y de Gobierno del Grupo de Río (G-Río)
 - (5) 8-12 de Junio de 1999: Visita a New York y Houston, EEUU. Reunión con Sectores financieros y Bursátiles estadounidenses.
 - (6) 30 de Julio de 1999: Visita Oficial a Jamaica.
 - (7) 20 de Septiembre de 1999: Visita Oficial a New York, EEUU. Asamblea de la ONU/Encuentro con el presidente Bill Clinton.
 - (8) 29 de Septiembre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Alemania.
 - (9) 30 de Septiembre de 1999: Visita al Vaticano, Italia.
 - (10) 12-13 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a China.
 - (11) 14-15 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Japón.
 - (12) 16-17 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Seúl, Corea del Sur.
 - (13) 19 de Octubre de 1999: Visita a Hong Kong.
 - (14) 20 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Singapur.
 - (15) 21 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Malasia.
 - (16) 22 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Filipinas.
 - (17) 24 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a España.
 - (18) 26 de Octubre de 1999: Visita Oficial a París, Francia. XXX Conferencia General de la Unesco
 - (19) 15 y 16 de noviembre de 1999: Visita Oficial a Cuba. IX Cumbre Iberoamericana de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno.

2000

- (20) 12 y 14 Abril de 2000: Visita Oficial a Cuba. Primera Cumbre Sur del Grupo de los 77
- (21) 4 de Mayo de 2000: Visita Oficial a Santa Marta, Colombia.
- (22) 6-7 de Agosto de 2000: Primera Visita Oficial al Reino de Arabia Saudita en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países de la OPEP.
- (23) 8 de Agosto de 2000: Primera Visita Oficial al Emirato de Kuwait en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países de la OPEP.

- (24) 9 de Agosto de 2000. Primera Visita Oficial al Estado de Qatar en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países de la OPEP.
- (25) 9 de Agosto de 2000. Primera Visita Oficial a los Emiratos Árabes Unidos en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países de la OPEP.
- (26) 9-10 Agosto de 2000. Primera visita oficial a la República Islámica de Irán en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países de la OPEP.
- (27) 10 de Agosto de 2000. Primera visita oficial a Irak en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países miembros de la OPEP.
- (28) 13 de Agosto de 2000. Primera visita oficial a Libia en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países miembros de la OPEP.
- (29) 14-16 de Agosto de 2000. Primera visita Oficial a la República Democrática y Popular de Argelia en el marco de la I Gira Presidencial por los países miembros de la OPEP.
- (30) 28- 29 de Agosto de 2000: Visita Oficial a la Paz, Bolivia.
- (31) 29 de Septiembre de 2000: Visita Oficial a Brasil. Cumbre Suramericana.
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2001

- (33) 17-20 de Febrero de 2001. Visita de Estado Presidencial al Reino de Arabia Saudita como parte de la II Gira por los países OPEP que lo llevó además a algunos países del continente Europeo.
- (34) 20-21 de Febrero de 2001. Primera Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela al Estado de Qatar.
- (35) 11 al 13 de marzo de 2001: Visita de trabajo a Cuba.
- (36) 18-20 De Mayo de 2001. Segunda Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela a la República Islámica de Irán, como parte de la II Gira Presidencial por Asia: Rusia, Irán, India, Bangladesh, China, Malasia e Indonesia.
- (37) 7 de Agosto de 2001: Visita Oficial a Trinidad y Tobago.
- (38) 16 de Agosto de 2001: Visita a Cartagena, Colombia. Congreso de la Asociación Nacional de Industriales de Colombia
- (39) 16-17 de Agosto de 2001: Visita Oficial a Chile. Cumbre del Grupo de Río
- (40) 7 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Ginebra, Suiza. Reunión con Mike Moore, Dr. de la OMC, con el Alto Comisionado para los Derechos Humanos Carl Lubbers.
- (41) 8-12 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Francia.
- (42) 13 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial al Vaticano, Italia.
- (43) 14 Octubre de 2001. Segunda Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela a la República Democrática y Popular de Argelia.
- (44) 15 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Bruselas y Amberes, Bélgica. Reunión con el rey Alfonso II, el presidente de la Comisión Europea, Romano Prodi y el primer ministro Belga Guy Berndstadt
- (45) 14-16 de Octubre de 2001. Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela a Libia. Ésta visita se enmarca en la II Gira por los países OPEP que lo llevó además a algunos países del continente Europeo.

- (46) 17 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Austria. Reunión con el secretario general de la OPEP, Alí Rodríguez Araque, el secretario de la Unctad y la Onudi.
- (47) 20 de Octubre de 2001. Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela al Reino de Arabia Saudita. Ésta visita se enmarca en la II Gira por los países OPEP que lo llevó además a algunos países del continente Europeo.
- (48) 21 de Octubre de 2001. Tercera Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela a la República Islámica de Irán. Ésta visita se enmarca en la II Gira por los países OPEP que lo llevó además a algunos países del continente Europeo.
- (49) 22 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Moscú, Rusia. Reunión con Vladimir Putin.
- (50) 23 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Inglaterra. Recibimiento por parte de la Reina Isabel II.
- (51) 24 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a Ottawa, Canadá. Reunión con el primer ministro de Canadá, Jean Chretien.
- (52) 25 de Octubre de 2001: Visita Oficial a México. Reunión con el presidente Fox.
- (53) 10 de Noviembre de 2001: Visita Oficial a New York, EEUU. Asamblea General de la ONU.

2002

- (54) Enero de 2002: Visita Oficial a Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Cumbre Presidencial Comunidad Andina.
- (55) 22-26 de Marzo de 2003: Visita Oficial a Monterrey, México. Reunión Acuerdo de Libre Comercio de las Américas
- (56) 16 de Mayo de 2002: Visita Oficial a Madrid, España.
- (57) 6 de agosto del 2002: Visita Oficial a Bolivia. Toma de posesión presidencial.
- (58) 8 de agosto del 2002: Visita Oficial a Bogotá, Colombia. Toma de posesión de A. Uribe.
- (59) 13 septiembre 2002: Visita a Nueva York, EEUU/ONU. Entrega de premio nobel de la paz a Carter.
- (60) 15-16 de Octubre de 2002: Visita Oficial a Francia.
- (61) 16-17 de Octubre de 2002: Visita Oficial a Italia.
- (62) 17 de Octubre de 2002: Viaje Oficial a Noruega.
- (63) 18 Octubre de 2002: Viaje oficial a Inglaterra.
- (64) 2 de Septiembre de 2002: Viaje Oficial a Johannesburgo, Sudáfrica. II Cumbre Mundial sobre el Desarrollo Sustentable.
- (65) 14 de Noviembre de 2002: Visita a Santa Marta y Cartagena, Colombia. Tercer Encuentro de Presidentes.
- (66) 1 de diciembre de 2002: Visita Oficial al Salvador.

2003

- (67) 2 de Enero de 2003: Visita Oficial a Brasil. Toma de Posesión de Lula Da Silva.

- (68) 11-16 de Enero de 2003: Visita Oficial a New York, EEUU. Entrega de la Presidencia del G-77.
- (69) 17 de Enero de 2003: Visita Oficial a Ecuador. Toma de Posesión de Lucio Gutiérrez.
- (70) 18 de Enero de 2003: Visita Oficial a Brasil.
- (71) 20- 25 de Febrero de 2003: Visita Oficial a Kuala Lumpur, Malasia. XIII Cumbre del NOAL
- (72) 25 de Abril de 2003: Visita de Trabajo a Recife, Brasil. Encuentro Presidencial Venezuela-Brasil.
- (73) 22 de Mayo de 2003: Visita Oficial a Cuzco, Perú. XVII Cumbre del Grupo de Río.
- (74) 18 de Junio de 2003: Visita Oficial a Asunción, Paraguay. XXIV Cumbre Presidencial MERCOSUR.
- (75) 24- 28 de Junio de 2003: _ Visita Oficial a Antioquia, Colombia. XIV Consejo Presidencial Andino.
- (76) 29 de junio de 2003: Visita de trabajo a Cuba.
- (77) 2- 5 de Julio de 2003: Visita Oficial a Montego Bay, Jamaica. XXIV Conferencia del CARICOM
- (78) 23-25 de Julio de 2003: Visita Oficial a Perú.
- (79) 30 de Julio al 2 de Agosto de 2003: Visita Oficial a Argentina.
- (80) 8-9 de Agosto de 2003: Visita de Trabajo a Trinidad y Tobago.
- (81) 19 de Agosto de 2003: Visita Oficial a Argentina.
- (82) 1 y 2 de septiembre de 2003: Visita a Cuba. Participación en la VI Conferencia de las Partes (COP-6) de la Convención de Naciones Unidas de Lucha contra la Desertificación y la Sequía
- (83) 14-15 de Noviembre de 2003: Visita a Santa Cruz, Bolivia. XIII Cumbre Iberoamericana de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno.

2004

- (84) 12-13 de Enero de 2004: Visita a Monterrey, México. Cumbre Extraordinaria de las Américas.
- 14 de Enero de 2004: Escala técnica de descanso en Cuba, tras participar en la Cumbre Extraordinaria de las Américas de Monterrey, México. **NO OFICIAL**
- (85) 19- 20 de Febrero de 2004: Visita Presidencial a Georgetown, Guyana.
- (86) 19 y 20 de Feb 2004: Visita Oficial a Guyana.
- (87) 28- 29 de Mayo de 2004: Visita a Guadalajara, México. III Cumbre América Latina y el Caribe- Unión Europea.
- (88) 7-8 de Julio de 2004: Visita a Puerto Iguazú, Argentina. XXVI Cumbre de Jefes de Estado del Mercosur.
- (89) 12 de Julio de 2004: Visita a Quito, Ecuador. XV Consejo Presidencial Andino.
- (90) Septiembre 2004: Visita a Manaus, Brasil. Encuentro Presidencial.
- (91) 4 y 5 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita a Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. XVIII Reunión de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno del Grupo de Río.
- (92) 6 de noviembre de 2004: Visita de Trabajo a Cuba.
- (93) 7 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a República Dominicana.
- (94) 9 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita a Cartagena, Colombia. IV Encuentro Presidencial.

- (95) 21- 23 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a España.
- (96) 24 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a Libia.
- (97) 25 y 26 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a Rusia.
- (98) 27-29 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a Irán.
- (99) 29 y 30 de Noviembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a Qatar.
- (100) 7- 9 de Diciembre de 2004: Visita al Cuzco, Perú. III Reunión de Presidentes de América del Sur.
- (101) 14-15 de Diciembre de 2004: Visita Oficial y amistosa a Cuba.
- (102) 15 de Diciembre de 2004: Visita a Ouro, Preto. Cumbre- Mercosur.
- (103) 22-24 de Diciembre de 2004: Visita Oficial a Beijing, China.

2005

- (104) 31 de Enero a 1 de Febrero de 2005: Visita Oficial a Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- (105) 30-31 de Enero de 2005: Visita a Porto Alegre, Brasil. Foro Social Mundial.
- (106) 1 de Marzo de 2005: Visita Oficial a Montevideo, Uruguay.
- (107) 4-6 de Marzo de 2005: Visita Oficial a la India. (Gira Presidencial)
- (108) 7-8 de Marzo de 2005: Visita Oficial a Qatar. (Gira Presidencial)
- (109) 8-9 de Marzo de 2005: Visita Oficial a Francia. (Gira Presidencial)
- (110) 27 de abril de 2005: Visita a Cuba. Atendiendo Invitación de Fidel Castro.
- (111) 10 y 11 de Mayo de 2005: Visita a Brasilia, Brasil. Cumbre América del Sur- Países Árabes.
- (112) 18-20 de Junio de 2005: Visita a la Asunción, Paraguay. XXVIII Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y/o de Gobierno. Mercosur.
- (113) 14-18 de Julio de 2005: Visita a Lima, Perú. XVI Consejo Presidencial Andino.
- (114) 9 de Agosto de 2005: Visita de trabajo a Uruguay. (Gira Presidencial Suramericana)
- (115) 11 de Agosto de 2005: Visita de trabajo a Argentina. (Gira Presidencial Suramericana)
- (116) 12 de Agosto de 2005: Visita de trabajo a Brasil. (Gira Presidencial Suramericana)
- (117) 20-22 de Agosto de 2005: Visita de Trabajo a Cuba. Participación de la primera graduación de la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina.
- (118) 24 de Agosto de 2005: Visita de Trabajo a Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- (119) 5 y 6 de Septiembre de 2005: Visita a Montego Bay, Jamaica. Reunión Petrocaribe.
- (120) 14- 16 de Septiembre de 2005: Visita a New York, EEUU. 60º Período de Sesiones de la ONU
- (121) 29 y 30 de Septiembre de 2005: Visita a Brasilia, Brasil. I reunión de la Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones.
- (122) 14 Y 15 de Octubre de 2005: Visita a Salamanca, España. XV Cumbre Iberoamericana.
- (123) 16 Octubre de 2005: Visita a Italia. (Gira de Trabajo)
- (124) Octubre de 2005: Visita a Francia. (Gira de Trabajo)

- (125) 1 al 5 de Noviembre de 2005: Visita a Mar del Plata, Argentina. IV Cumbre de las Américas.
- (126) 8 y 9 de Diciembre de 2005: Visita a Montevideo, XXIX Cumbre presidencial Mercosur.
- (127) 25 de Diciembre de 2005: Visita Oficial a Beijing, China.

2006

- (128) 19 de Enero de 2006: Visita a Brasilia. Cumbre Trilateral Argentina, Brasil, Venezuela.
- (129) 22 de Enero de 2006: Visita a Bolivia. Toma de posesión de Evo Morales.
- (130) 3 de febrero de 2006: Visita a Cuba. Recibe el Premio Internacional José Martí, de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO). Inauguración de la XV Feria Internacional del Libro
- (131) 21 de Abril de 2006: Visita Oficial a Brasilia.
- (132) 26 de Abril de 2006: Visita a Brasil. Cumbre Trilateral Argentina, Brasil, Venezuela.
- (133) 28 y 29 de Abril 2006: Visita Oficial a Cuba.
- (134) 03 de Mayo de 2006: Visita a Iguazú, Argentina. Participación en mesa de trabajo junto con sus pares de Bolivia, Brasil y Argentina.
- (135) 04 de Mayo de 2006: Visita Oficial a Iguazú, Bolivia. Cumbre Cuatrilateral Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil y Venezuela.
- (136) 09 de Mayo de 2006: Visita a Viena, Austria. IV Cumbre de Presidentes y Jefes de Gobierno de América Latina y el Caribe con la Unión Europea.
- (137) 11 de Mayo 2006: Visita Oficial al Vaticano.
- (138) 15 de Mayo de 2006: Visita al alcalde de Londres, Inglaterra.
- (139) 16 y 17 de Mayo 2006: Visita Oficial a Argelia
- (140) 17 y 18 de Mayo 2006: Visita Oficial a Libia.
- (141) 26 de Mayo de 2006: Visita a Bolivia.
- (142) 30 de Mayo de 2006: Visita a Ecuador. Firma de Acuerdos Energéticos.
- (143) 24 y 26 de Junio 2006: Visita Oficial a la República de Panamá. Actos de conmemoración del 180º aniversario del Congreso Anfictiónico
- (144) 1 y 2 de Julio 2006: Visita Oficial a la República de Gambia. VII Cumbre de la Unión Africana.
- (145) 19 de Julio de 2006: Visita a Córdoba, Argentina. XXX Reunión del Consejo del Mercado Común y Cumbre de Jefes de Estado del Mercosur y Estados Asociados
- (146) 22 de Julio de 2006: Visita a Lisboa, Portugal.
- (147) 23 de Julio de 2006: Visita a Bielorrusia. (Gira Presidencial)
- (148) 26 de Julio de 2006: Visita Oficial a Rusia. (Gira Presidencial)
- (149) 28 de Julio de 2006: Quinta Visita Oficial a Qatar. (Gira Presidencial)
- (150) 29 de Julio de 2006: Visita Oficial a Irán. (Gira Presidencial)
- (151) 30 de Julio de 2006: Primera Visita Oficial a Vietnam. (Gira Presidencial)
- (152) 1 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a Malí. (Gira Presidencial)
- (153) 2 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a Porto Novo, Benín. (Gira Presidencial)
- (154) 14 de Agosto de 2006: Visita a Jamaica. (Atendiendo invitación)
- (155) 22 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a China. (Gira Presidencial)

- (156) 29 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a Malasia. (Gira Presidencial)
- (157) 30 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a Siria. (Gira Presidencial). **OFICIAL SEGÚN EL MRE.**
- (158) 31 de Agosto de 2006: Visita Oficial a Luanda, Angola. (Gira Presidencial)
- (159) 20 de Septiembre de 2006: Visita a New York, EEUU. 61° Período de sesiones de la Asamblea General de la ONU.
- (160) 8 y 9 de Diciembre de 2006: Visita a Cochabamba, Bolivia. II Cumbre Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones.

2007

- (161) 10 de Enero de 2007: Visita a Nicaragua. Toma de posesión de Daniel Ortega.
- (162) 14 de Enero de 2007: Visita a Ecuador. Toma de posesión de Rafael Correa.
- (163) 18 y 19 de Enero de 2007: Visita a Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. XXXI Cumbre del Mercosur.
- (164) 15 de Febrero de 2007: Visita Oficial a Dominica.
- (165) 16 de Febrero de 2007: Visita Oficial a San Vicente y las Granadinas.
- (166) 9 de Marzo de 2007: Visita de Trabajo a Argentina.
- (167) 10 de Marzo de 2007: Visita Oficial a Bolivia.
- (168) 11 de Marzo de 2007: Visita Oficial a Nicaragua.
- (169) 12 de Marzo de 2007: Visita (Inspección de obras realizadas por la Brigada Intern. Simón Bolívar y reunión con su homólogo haitiano) a Haití
- (170) 27 de Junio de 2007: Visita de Trabajo a Rusia.
- (171) 28 de Junio de 2007: Visita Oficial a Bielorrusia.
- (172) 30 de Junio de 2007: Visita Oficial a Irán.
- (173) Julio de 2007: Visita de Trabajo a Nicaragua.
- (174) Agosto de 2007: Visita Oficial a Argentina.
- (175) 6 de Agosto de 2007: Visita de Trabajo a Uruguay.
- (176) 7 de Agosto de 2007: Visita Oficial a Ecuador.
- (177) 9 de Agosto de 2007: Visita Oficial a Bolivia.
- (178) 31 de Agosto de 2007: Visita Oficial a Colombia.
- (179) 13 de Octubre de 2007: Visita de Trabajo a Cuba.
- (180) 8 de Noviembre de 2007: Visita a Chile. XVII Cumbre Iberoamericana
- (181) 17 de Noviembre de 2007: Visita Oficial a Arabia Saudita.
- (182) 18 de Noviembre de 2007: Visita Oficial a Irán.
- (183) 19 de Noviembre de 2007: Visita Oficial a Francia
- (184) 20 de Noviembre de 2007: Visita de Estado a Lisboa, Portugal.
- (185) 10 de Diciembre de 2007: Visita a Argentina. Toma de posesión de Cristina Kirchner.
- (186) 18 de Diciembre de 2007: Visita a Uruguay. XXXIV Cumbre del Mercosur.
- (187) 22 de Diciembre de 2007: Visita Oficial a Cuba. IV Cumbre de Petrocaribe.

ANNEX 2

State visits of Middle Eastern leaders to Venezuela in 2000-2007:

2000

25 Y 26 de Agosto de 2000. II Cumbre de la OPEP en Caracas.

2004.

24-29 de Febrero de 2004. Segunda Visita Oficial del líder de la República Islámica de Irán, Seyed Mohammed Khatami a la XII Cumbre del G-15 celebrada en Caracas.

2 de Septiembre de 2004. Primera visita de trabajo del presidente de la República Democrática Saharaui, Mohamed Abdelaziz a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

2005

10-12 de Marzo de 2005. Tercera Visita Oficial del presidente de la República Islámica de Irán, Seyed Mohammad Khatami a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

2006.

17-18 de Septiembre de 2006. Primera Visita Oficial del presidente de la República Islámica de Irán, Mahmud Ahmadineyad, a Venezuela

2007

13 de Enero de 2007. Segunda Visita Oficial del Presidente de la República Islámica de Irán, Mahmud Ahmadineyad a Venezuela.

27 de Septiembre de 2007. Tercera Visita Oficial del presidente de la República Islámica de Irán, Mahmud Ahmadineyad a Venezuela.

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- <http://www.mre.gov.ve>
- <http://www.mre.gov.ve/Noticias/A2004/GiraPresidencial-2004/Katar/index.htm>
- <http://www.mre.gov.ve/Noticias/Eventos-Intern-2003.htm>
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- <http://www.mre.gov.ve/Noticias/Eventos-Intern-2005.htm>
- <http://www.elmundo.es/especiales/2002/04/internacional/venezuela/historia.html#1999>
- <http://www.eluniversal.com>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/spanish/news/>
- <http://www.analitica.com>
- <http://www.elmundo.es>
- http://www.venezuelatoday.org/01-10-17_es.htm
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ANNEX 3**Venezuelan public funds spent by HCF abroad in 2000-2007:**

EEUU	US\$
Chávez ordenó a Citgo, filial de PDVSA, financiar un estudio para la limpieza del Río Hudson en el Bronx	Monto estimado 100.000 dólares.
Citgo inició la distribución de 20 millones de galones de combustible de calefacción "barato" a los pobres de Boston y el Bronx, lo cual le genera a Venezuela	Gastos de 200 millones de dólares
En THE NEW YORK TIMES del 01/12/2005 se publicó una propaganda del gobierno de Chávez	Según expertos alrededor de 180.000dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	200 millones 280 mil dólares
CENTROAMÉRICA Y EL CARIBE:	
CUBA	
Se construyeron 150 casas	2 millones de dólares
Se realizó un Proyecto de Electrificación	20 millones de dólares
Proyecto de Desarrollo Endógeno en los asentamientos de Bolívar, ubicados en el Municipio Sandino, Provincia Pinar del Río	5 millones 682 mil dólares
Financió la reforma de la refinería Cienfuegos	43 millones de dólares
De la distribución de petróleo que Venezuela hace a través de Petrocaribe, 98.000 barriles diarios son enviados a Cuba a cambio de asesoría deportiva, educativa y de salud, hoy en día hay 20.000 médicos cubanos en Venezuela,	1.764 millones de dólares anuales
Venezuela les paga a los médicos cubanos un salario que asciende a los 400 dólares mensuales por médico	96 millones de dólares anuales
La deuda cubana acumulada desde el 2002 asciende al monto de 3.000 millones de dólares. Chávez reconoció que se canjeará la deuda por servicios cubanos	3.000 millones de dólares
La oficina del BIV en Cuba, a través de Ministerio de la Construcción cubano, dará financiamiento para la compra de cerámicas, azulejos, baldosas y piezas sanitarias para las viviendas que fueron devastadas por el Huracán Emily	10 millones de dólares
La oficina del BIV en Cuba proporciona financiamiento para la compañía Cubana de	20 millones de dólares

Petróleo que se utilizarán en la compra de insumos y materiales de seguridad como cascos, plantas eléctricas, entre otros	
La oficina del BIV en Cuba financiará una planta de lubricantes y aceites a instalarse en la ciudad de La Habana	47 millones de dólares
La oficina del BIV en Cuba ha contemplado una línea de crédito para el sector turismo para la adquisición, en Venezuela, de partes automotores de vehículos destinados al turismo	10 millones de dólares
Se acordó la creación de una compañía naviera cubano-venezolana que será la encargada de distribuir el crudo en el Caribe dentro del marco de Petrocaribe	???
SUB-TOTAL:	5.017 millones 682 mil dólares
DOMINICA	
Chávez hizo una donación para la construcción de un nuevo aeropuerto	10 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	10 millones de dólares
JAMAICA	
Donación para la reforma de la refinería de Petrojam en Kingston	87 millones de dólares
préstamo para la construcción de una sección del proyecto jamaicano denominado "Autopista 2000"	300 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	387 millones de dólares
PUERTO RICO	
Chávez hizo una donación al grupo puertorriqueño "Puerto Rican Salsa and Bembe" para participar en el festival de Chicago realizado en octubre de 2005	100.000 dólares
Se está vendiendo 250.000 barriles de petróleo con un 1,5 % de descuento	! Venezuela deja de percibir 150 mil dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	250 mil dólares
REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA	
El gobierno realizó un préstamo para obras de infraestructura	156 millones 400 mil dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	156 millones 400 mil dólares
EL CARIBE	
FONDO ALBA-CARIBE:	

financiamiento de programas sociales y económicos en los países del Caribe	50 millones de dólares
PETROCARIBE:	
Venezuela acordó la distribución de 170.000 barriles diarios de petróleo a los países del Caribe con los que se suscribió el acuerdo de Petrocaribe (precios ventajosos), restando los barriles cubanos son 72.000 barriles diarios distribuidos entre los otros países del Caribe	Pérdida al país de 742 millones de dólares para el año 2005
SUB-TOTAL:	792 millones de dólares
AMÉRICA DEL SUR	
ARGENTINA	
PDV Marina mandó a reparación los buques "Luisa Cáceres de Arismendi", "Negra Hipólita", "Manuela Sáenz" y "Libertad" en los Astilleros Río Santiago	6 millones 450 mil dólares aproximadamente
PDV Marina firmó un convenio de construcción de dos buques petroleros en los Astilleros Río Santiago	120 millones de dólares.
Los dos primeros acuerdos para la compra de bonos de la deuda de Argentina	1.000 millones de dólares
El intercambio de 5 millones de barriles de fuel oil y 250.000 dediesel por carne y ganado en pie	gasto al país de 200 millones de dólares
La venta de 4 millones de barriles de petróleo a cambio de productos industriales argentinos	gasto al país de 340 millones de dólares.
La compra de la Refinería Rhasa y sus estaciones de servicio por parte de PDVSA	100 millones de dólares
e está realizando una nueva compra de bonos de la deuda argentina	puede llegar a 2.400 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	4.166 millones 450 mil dólares
BOLIVIA	
La venta de diesel con un 10% de descuento y a crédito genera un costo	851.275 dólares en un año (2004)
Venezuela suministrará el total de diesel que importa Bolivia (150 mil barriles mensuales aproximadamente) a cambio de productos agrícolas	50 millones de dólares anuales.
Se hará una donación para ayudar a Bolivia	30 millones de dólares (Fondosur)
SUB-TOTAL:	180 millones 851 mil 275 dólares
BRASIL	

Venezuela negoció la compra de 40 buques petroleros	2.000 millones de dólares
La construcción de la refinería Abreu de Lima en Pernambuco, entre PDVSA y Petrobrás	2.500 millones de dólares
Patrocinar el desfile de la escuela brasilera de Samba Unidos de Vila Isabel en el carnaval de Río de Janeiro para febrero de 2006	1 millón de dólares
SUBTOTAL:	4.501 millones de dólares
COLOMBIA	
Interés del gobierno en la subasta que adelanta el gobierno colombiano de la Refinería de Cartagena de Indias y de la empresa Ecogas	???
ECUADOR	
La compra de bonos de la deuda ecuatorian	25 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	25 millones de dólares
PARAGUAY	
La venta de 13.000 barriles diarios de gasoil y 18.600 barriles diarios de petróleo en condiciones ventajosas	100 millones de dólares anuales aproximadamente
Se acordó invertir en la expansión de la Refinería Villa Elisa (de Petropar), con miras a su modernización y optimización.	???
Chávez propuso financiar la recuperación del lago Ypacaraí	???
SUB-TOTAL	100 millones de dólares
URUGUAY	
El suministro de 43.600 barriles diarios de petróleo venezolano a precios y condiciones de pagos ventajosas, y que además significa un intercambio de buena parte con alimentos y software	40 Millones de dolares
Donación para la ampliación de Refinería La Teja en Montevideo	600 millones de dólares
La compra de alcohol carburante uruguayo	7 millones de dólares
El intercambio para compensar la factura del suministro de petróleo por bienes y servicios uruguayos -cimento, alcohol y vaquillas-	200 millones de dólares
El préstamo para ANCAP para la adecuación de la planta industrial de Bella Unión y fabricar 15.000 metros cúbicos de etanol	7 millones de dólares (Fondo Petrolero)

El intercambio planificado entre Cadafe y el UTE	10 millones 300mil dólares (Fondo Petrolero)
El préstamo para el Ministerio de Desarrollo Social para atender a los pobres	3 millones de dólares (Fonba).
El préstamo para el Hospital de Clínicas para su equipamiento y remodelación	17 millones 500 mil dólares (Fonba).
Los créditos para recuperar empresas uruguayas dedicadas a manufactura de vidrio, caucho, guantes y artículos de cuero	5 millones de dólares (Fonba).
Chávez propuso ayudas para la construcción de algunas instalaciones de Bolívar	???
SUB-TOTAL:	889 millones 800 mil dólares
ASIA	
INDONESIA	
Venezuela está construyendo un instituto tecnológico en la zona de Banda Aceh, afectada por el tsunami	2 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	2 millones de dólares
AFRÍCA	
NÍGER	
Ayuda alimentaria	1 millón 500.000 dólares
BURKINA FASO	
Ayuda alimentaria	1 millón 500.000 dólares
MAURITANA	
Ayuda alimentaria	500.000 dólares
MALi	
Ayuda humanitaria	800.000 dólares
SUBTOTAL:	3 millones 800 mil dólares
TeleSur	
Creación del canal TelseSur	10 millones de dólares
SUB-TOTAL:	10 millones de dólares
MONTO TOTAL DE LOS REGALOS	US\$ 16.442.513.275
(AL CAMBIO OFICIAL: 2.150.00)	Bs.35.329.903.541.250/